

**IN THE CLAIMS**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the Application.

1. (previously presented) A method for enabling identification of network users having similar interests and facilitating communication between them, the method comprising:
  - providing a server having a distance calculating module operating thereon;
  - using the distance module, calculating a virtual distance between a web page that a user is accessing through a first terminal and web pages accessed by other users through one or more second terminals, wherein the web page that the user is accessing and each of the web pages accessed by the other users comprise any web page on the Internet;
  - displaying for the user on a display a listing of other users determined to be within a predetermined virtual distance from the web page that the user is accessing; and
  - enabling the user to communicate with one or more of the other users from the displayed listing.
2. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the method further comprises receiving a Uniform Resource Identifier (URI) address of the web page that the user is accessing.
3. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the virtual distance is calculated by the distance module using a distance mapping technique.

4. (previously presented) The method of claim 3, wherein the distance mapping technique comprises identifying users accessing web pages having words or phrases of cognitive similarity.
5. (previously presented) The method of claim 3, wherein the distance mapping technique comprises comparing a Uniform Resource Identifier (URI) address of the web page that the user is accessing to URI addresses of the web pages being accessed by other users.
6. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein displaying for the user a listing of other users further comprises displaying the listing of other users in a graphical user interface (GUI).
7. (original) The method of claim 6, wherein the GUI comprises a web browser.
8. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising enabling the user to access profile data associated with one or more of the other users selected from the displayed listing.
9. (original) The method of claim 8, wherein the profile data comprises one or more of contact information, demographic information, profession, hobbies, or interests.
10. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein enabling the user to communicate with one or more of the other users selected from the displayed listing

further comprises enabling the user to instant message one or more of the other users selected from the displayed listing.

11. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein enabling the user to communicate with one or more of the other users selected from the displayed listing further comprises enabling the user to e-mail one or more of the other users selected from the displayed listing.
12. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein enabling the user to communicate with one or more of the other users selected from the displayed listing further comprises enabling the user to initiate a voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) communication with one or more of the other users selected from the displayed listing.
13. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein enabling the user to communicate with one or more of the other users selected from the displayed listing further comprises enabling the user to initiate a transaction with one or more of the other users selected from the displayed listing.
14. (original) The method of claim 13, wherein the transaction comprises an exchange of currency.
15. (original) The method of claim 13, wherein the transaction comprises an exchange of at least one of airline frequent flier miles, or affinity program points.

16. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising enabling the user to execute a search query against a search engine.
17. (previously presented) The method of claim 16, wherein results of the search query comprise a listing of one or more web pages, and wherein each of the one or more web pages listed is displayed with an associated visual indicator displaying a number of users currently accessing that respective web page.
18. (previously presented) A system for enabling identification of network users having similar interests and facilitating communication between them, the system comprising:
  - a server having a distance calculating module operating thereon for calculating a virtual distance between a web page that a user is accessing through a first terminal and web pages accessed by other users through one or more second terminals, wherein the web page that the user is accessing and each of the web pages accessed by the other users comprise any web page on the Internet;
  - a display displaying for the user a listing of other users determined to be within a predetermined virtual distance from the web page that the user is accessing; and
  - a communications module operable on the server enabling the user to communicate with one or more of the other users from the displayed listing.
19. (previously presented) A method for enabling identification of network users having similar interests and facilitating communication between them, the method comprising:
  - providing a server having modules operable thereon;

identifying a data object that a user is accessing through a first terminal using at least one of the modules;

determining a listing of other users that are currently accessing or that have recently accessed the data object through one or more second terminals;

filtering the listing of other users based on an affinity between data associated with the user and data associated with the other users;

displaying the filtered listing of the other users on a display; and

enabling the user to communicate with one or more of the other users selected from the displayed filtered listing.

20. (previously presented) The method of claim 19, wherein the affinity between the data associated with the user and data associated with the other users is determined using similarity of profile attributes.
21. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the method comprises identifying the web page that the user is accessing.
22. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the method comprises determining the presence of other users at or near the web page that the user is accessing.
23. (previously presented) The system of claim 18, wherein the system comprises means for identifying the web page that the user is accessing.

24. (previously presented) The system of claim 18, wherein the system comprises means for determining the presence of other users at or near the web page that the user is accessing.
  
25. (previously presented) A method for enabling identification within a network of a first user having interests similar to a second user and facilitating communication between them, the method comprising:  
  
providing a server having a distance calculating module operating thereon;  
  
using the distance module, calculating a virtual distance between a first web page that a first user is accessing through a first terminal and a second web page accessed by a second user through a second terminal, wherein the first web page and the second web page comprise any web page on the Internet;  
  
wherein upon the second web page being determined to be within a predetermined virtual distance from the first web page, the first user may communicate with the second user through the first terminal.
  
26. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the method comprises tracking the virtual location of the user and each of the other users anywhere on the Internet.
  
27. (previously presented) The system of claim 18, wherein the system comprises means for tracking the virtual location of the user and each of the other users anywhere on the Internet.

28. (previously presented) A method for enabling identification of network users having similar characteristics and facilitating communication between them, the method comprising:

providing a server having a distance calculating module operating thereon;

using the distance module, calculating a virtual distance between a web page that a user is accessing through a first terminal and web pages accessed by other users through one or more second terminals, wherein the web page that the user is accessing and each of the web pages accessed by the other users comprise any web page on the Internet; and

displaying for the user on a display interface a list of other users compiled based on the virtual distance between the web page that the user is accessing and the web pages accessed by the other users.

29. (previously presented) The method according to claim 28, further comprising enabling the user to communicate via the first terminal with one or more of the other users from the displayed listing.

30. (previously presented) The method of claim 28, wherein the list of other users is ranked in order of nearest to furthest virtual distance from the web page that the user is accessing.

31. (previously presented) The method of claim 28, wherein the list of other users is compiled based on the virtual distance between the web page that the user is accessing and the web pages accessed by the other users being with a predetermined virtual distance.

32. (previously presented) A system for enabling identification of network users having similar characteristics and facilitating communication between them, the system comprising:
  - a server having a distance calculating module operating thereon for calculating a virtual distance between a web page that a user is accessing through a first terminal and web pages accessed by other users through one or more second terminals, wherein the web page that the user is accessing and each of the web pages comprise any web page on the Internet;
  - a display displaying for the user a listing of other users determined to be within a predetermined virtual distance from the web page that the user is accessing.
33. (previously presented) The system according to claim 32, wherein the user can communicate with one or more of the other users from the displayed listing.
34. (previously presented) The system according to claim 32, further comprising a communication module operating on the server for enabling the user to communicate with one or more of the other users via the first terminal.
35. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the virtual distance is calculated upon the user accessing a web page through the first terminal.
36. (new) A method for enabling identification of network users having similar interests and facilitating communication between them, the method comprising:

providing a server having a distance calculating module operating thereon; using the distance calculating module to calculate a virtual distance between a web page that a user is accessing through a first terminal and web pages accessed by other users through one or more second terminals, wherein:

the web page that the user is accessing and each of the web pages accessed by other users comprise any web page on the Internet, and

the virtual distance is calculated by making a comparison between web page parameters selected from the group consisting of the URI address of the web page accessed by the user to the URI address of one or more of the web pages accessed by other users and words or phrases contained in the web page accessed by the user to words or phrases contained in one or more of the web pages accessed by other users;

displaying for the user on a display a listing of the other users that are accessing a web page that contains words or phrases that are cognitively similar to the words or phrases contained in the web page that the user is accessing; and

enabling the user to communicate with one or more of the other users from the displayed listing.

37. (new) A method for enabling identification of network users having similar interests and facilitating communication between them, the method comprising:

providing a server having a distance calculating module operating thereon; using the distance calculating module to calculate a virtual distance between a web page that a user is accessing through a first terminal and web pages accessed by other users through one or more second terminals, wherein:

the virtual distance is calculated by comparing the Uniform Resource Identifier (URI) address of the web page that the user is accessing to the URI address of one or more of the web pages accessed by other users, and

the web page that the user is accessing and each of the web pages accessed by other users comprise any web page on the Internet

displaying for the user on a display a listing of the other users that are accessing a web page having a URI address that is within a predetermined virtual distance of the URI address of the web page that the user is accessing; and

enabling the user to communicate with one or more of the other users from the displayed listing.

38. (new) A method for enabling identification of network users having similar interests and facilitating communication between them, the method comprising:

providing a server having a distance calculating module operating thereon;

using the distance calculating module to calculate a virtual distance between a web page that a user is accessing through a first terminal and web pages accessed by other users through one or more second terminals, wherein:

the virtual distance is calculated by comparing words or phrases contained in the web page that the user is accessing to words or phrases contained in one or more of the web pages accessed by other users, and

the web page that the user is accessing and each of the web pages accessed by other users comprise any web page on the Internet

displaying for the user on a display a listing of the other users that are accessing a web page that contains words or phrases that are cognitively similar to the words or phrases contained in the web page that the user is accessing; and

enabling the user to communicate with one or more of the other users from the displayed listing.

39. (new) A method for enabling identification of network users having similar interests and facilitating communication between them, the method comprising:

calculating a degree of conceptual nearness of a web page that a user is accessing through a first terminal to web pages accessed by other users through one or more second terminals, wherein

the web page that the user is accessing and each of the web pages accessed by other users comprise any web page on the Internet, and

the degree of conceptual nearness is calculated by making a comparison between web page parameters selected from the group consisting of the URI address of the web page accessed by the user to the URI address of one or more of the web pages accessed by other users and words or phrases contained in the web page accessed by the user to words or phrases contained in one or more of the web pages accessed by other users;

displaying for the user on a display a listing of the other users that are accessing a web page that is within a predetermined degree of conceptual nearness to the web page that the user is accessing; and

enabling the user to communicate with one or more of the other users from the displayed listing.